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Bike lane plan picking up steam

By Philip Franchine

GREEN VALLEY--The effort to create a master plan for bicycle and pedestrian lanes in the area seems to be picking up steam as activists prepare to present a draft plan to the public Thursday.

A Pima County transportation official said that bike lanes recently announced for Continental Road east of Abrego will be six feet wide on each side of the pavement and are part of a repaving project there.

In addition, bike advocate Bill Adamson and others presented the draft master plan to County Administrator Chuck Huckelberry last week during a discussion about building bike lanes on Sahuarita Road.

While Huckelberry made no specific commitment about the Sahuarita Road project, Adamson said the administrator was pleased to receive a draft plan that included a regional approach, listed priorities, specific project descriptions, cost estimates and discussion of outside funding.

The draft master plan will be presented for public comment at 4 p.m. Thursday in the Saguaro Room of the Canoa Hills Center, 3660 S. Camino del Sol.

Handouts will be available summarizing the plan, and will include color-coded maps that show existing and needed multi-use lanes, gaps in the trail and multi-use lane system as well as spread sheets that include potential funding sources and other project data.

Multi-use lanes

The plan was developed over nearly a year by the Green Valley Community Coordinating Council (GVCCC) Bike & Pedestrian Committee, which is chaired by Adamson, who spearheaded the drive to get multi-use lanes on Camino del Sol.

Details on the Continental project should be released in several weeks, a county official said.

"Pima County, in conjunction with La Posada [at Park Centre] has been able to allocate funds in order to repave the section of Continental from the eastern limits of the newly

constructed Abrego intersection to the intersection of Whitehouse Canyon Road," county transportation Engineering Division Manager Rick Ellis said in an e-mail.

"The improvements will include an overlay of the existing roadway as well as the addition of 6-foot paved shoulders in each direction to accommodate bicyclists and golf carts.

Specific details and schedule for construction will be developed by County staff over the next several weeks, and we will be sharing the information with the public as things unfold."

Ellis also wrote, "Supervisor Ray Carroll strongly supports moving forward with the project because of the cost-share partnering between Pima County and La Posada and is truly appreciative of the support and assistance from the Green Valley community."

Adamson praised Carroll for supporting both the Camino del Sol and Continental projects, noting that residents had been asking for both for some time, but that funding had been lacking.

Boost for safety

Adamson said the Continental project will boost safety and provide bike lanes connecting segments of popular bicycle routes.

Currently, he said, more adventurous riders share the road with motorists on the missing links, while less adventurous riders find their pedaling restricted because various trails and bike-friendly road sections are not connected.

The master plan is intended to address the issues of connectivity in a way that will appeal to the county and coordinate planning with the town of Sahuarita as well, Adamson said.

For more information, contact Adamson at 648-6340 or the GVCCC office at 648-1936.

The draft plan is being developed as part of the GVCCC "Vision 2020" project, with the objective of identifying the lanes and trails needed now and to guide future planning, GVCCC President Dick Roberts said in a letter, noting that community input is needed to complete the plan.

Connections sought

"A major goal of our plan is to connect existing multi-use lanes throughout Green Valley and adjacent communities to achieve safe bicycle routes from Tucson to Tubac and Arivaca. Therefore, this draft master plan includes our interests in the jurisdictions of Pima County, Districts 2, 3 and 4, and the Town of Sahuarita," Roberts wrote.

Adamson noted that planning for multi-use improvements is a continuing process that changes with population and traffic changes, but said the plan gives guidance to advocates and to public officials.

One of the goals in developing a master plan is to coordinate efforts in Green Valley and Sahuarita, especially with the growth of Quail Creek and the Madera Highlands area, and to coordinate efforts between the town and the county along, for example, Sahuarita

Road.

Adamson hopes to get a final draft prepared by this spring.

The plan includes a map that depicts "urgent safety" concerns that are not yet being addressed, including a 0.2 mile gap in the bike lanes on Abrego Drive just south of the town limits. Also, a stretch of Camino del Sol that still lacks bike lanes and Old Nogales Highway, which is getting increasing bike traffic and would connect Continental with existing multi-use lanes on Nogales Highway.

Concerns that are getting attention include La Canada Drive in Sahuarita, where the town is building bike lanes, and Sahuarita Road.

Adamson said the county bond project calls for bike lanes within the town of Sahuarita, but said the committee is asking for the lanes to be extended another mile and half to Alvernon Way.

Future projects

Future growth multi-use lane projects include Canoa Road; Continental from Portillo to Duval Mine Road; Calle Tres; White House Canyon Road from Old Nogales Highway to Continental School; Mission Road and Helmet Peak Road.

There also is a map showing pedestrian trails.

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